

**REMARKS**

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed November 21, 2001. In the Office Action, pending Claims 1-51, 53, 54, 56 and 57 were rejected. Claims 58-85 have been added. Thus, Claims 1-51, 53-54, and 56-85 are now pending in this Application. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully request an interference with the Nicholson Patent for the reasons described below.

**Request for Interference**

Claims 63-85 have been added in conjunction with Applicants' request for an interference with U.S. Patent No. 6,332,128 B1. Applicants specifically request that at least Claim 63 be identified as a count, and respectfully suggests that at least Claim 1 of the Nicholson Patent corresponds to this count.

Applicants respectfully contend that this request for an Interference is made timely in accordance with 35 U.S.C. § 135(b) since the Nicholson Patent was not published or issued more than one year ago.

New Claims 63-85 are fully supported by Applicants' specification. The table below illustrates examples of portions of Applicants' specification where such support may be found. Such support includes, but is not limited to the citations below.

<u>Claim(s)</u>	<u>Support</u>
63-65	Page 6, lines 1-23, FIGURE 1
66, 67	Page 13, lines 23-26 Page 16, lines 8-12, FIGURE 5 Page 34, lines 20-24, FIGURE 25
68, 69, 70	Page 14, lines 5-17 Page 14, lines 24-27
71, 72	Page 10, line 25 – Page 11, line 19

73	Page 14, line 24 – Page 15, line 3
74, 75, 76	Page 6, lines 1-23, FIGURE 1 Page 13, lines 23-26 Page 14, lines 5-17 Page 14, lines 24-27 Page 16, lines 8-12, FIGURE 5 Page 34, lines 20-24, FIGURE 25
77, 78	Page 6, lines 1-23, FIGURE 1 Page 10, line 25 – Page 11, line 19 Page 13, lines 23-26 Page 14, lines 5-17 Page 14, line 24 – Page 15, line 3 Page 16, lines 8-12, FIGURE 5 Page 34, lines 20-24, FIGURE 25
79	Page 6, lines 18-19
80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85	Page 6, lines 1-23, FIGURE 1 Page 13, lines 23-26 Page 16, lines 8-12, FIGURE 5 Page 34, lines 20-24, FIGURE 25 and FIGURES 2, 6, 25

### New Claims

New Claim 58 is directed to a method which includes identifying a plurality of discount triggering items in an initial transaction, and providing a customer with a total discount based upon the purchase of the discount triggering items. The total discount is redeemable toward purchase of fuel during a subsequent transaction with a subsequent vendor. Issue information associated with the total discount value is transmitted to a third party, for further processing. None of the references previously cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, disclose, teach or suggest each of these limitations.

For example, *Greer* is directed to a method for creating cumulative discount certificates in response to the purchase of multiple discountable products in a retail customer order. The cumulative discount certificates of *Greer* are redeemable on a subsequent visit to the store.

*Greer* does not disclose, teach or suggest providing a customer with a total discount redeemable toward the purchase of fuel during a subsequent transaction with a subsequent vendor. Instead, *Greer* is directed to a method for providing the customer with a general discount redeemable for items offered for sale by the initial vendor. The "fuel" of the present invention is a pre-selected item available for purchase from a subsequent vendor, distinct from the initial vendor. Therefore, the method of the present invention provides an incentive to the customer to purchase fuel from the subsequent vendor, thereby potentially increasing sales. The increased sales benefit the subsequent vendor, not the initial vendor, as disclosed in *Greer*.

*Greer* does not provide a way of targeting a specific product (e.g., fuel) to increase sales of the specific product. Furthermore, *Greer* is limited in the items in which it can provide a discount on, since the customer must redeem the discount on a product offered for sale by the initial vendor. The present invention, on the other hand, provides a method to promote sales of a product sold outside the store where the discount is generated.

The teachings of the present invention benefit at least two parties, the initial vendor and the subsequent vendor. A customer who is interested in saving money on the purchase of fuel, is incentivised to purchase products from the initial vendor. Conversely, a customer who purchases items from the initial vendor and receives the discount is incentivised to purchase fuel from the subsequent vendor. The method disclosed in *Greer* does not disclose, teach or suggest these limitations, and therefore, cannot provide these advantages.

Furthermore, *Greer* does not disclose, teach or suggest transmitting issue information associated with providing the customer with the total discount value, to a third party, as described in Claim 58. The third party is separate and distinct from the initial vendor. Since the teachings of *Greer* include providing the discount to the customer during a subsequent visit to the store, there's no reason to transmit the issue information to a third party that is separate and distinct from the initial vendor. However, since the present invention includes providing a discount at an initial vendor, and redeeming the discount information at a subsequent vendor, it is advantageous to transmit the issue information to a third party for

further processing. For example, as described in Claim 61, the third party may associate issue information received from the initial vendor and redemption information received from the subsequent vendor. This allows the third party to verify the validity of the redemption information and prevent fraud.

Furthermore, as defined in Claim 62, the third party can generate invoices for each of the respective manufacturers. For at least these reasons, Claims 58, 61 and 62 are patentably distinguishable from *Greer*.

Claims 59 and 60 each depend from new Claim 58. Therefore, Applicants respectfully contend that Claims 59 and 60 are patentably distinguishable from *Greer*, for example, for the same reasons discussed above with regard to new Claim 58.

New Claims 58-62 are fully supported in the specification, figures and claims of the present application. No new subject matter has been added regarding Claims 58-62. Support for such claims includes, but is not limited to, the following citations: Page 10, line 25 – Page 11, line 19; Page 14, line 24- Page 15, line 3; Page 6, lines 1-23, FIGURE 1; Page 10, line 25 – Page 11, line 19; Page 13, lines 23-26; Page 14, lines 5-17; Page 14, line 24 – Page 15, line 3; Page 16, lines 8-12, FIGURE 5; and Page 34, lines 20-24, FIGURE 25.

### **Section 103 Rejections**

The Examiner rejected pending Claims 1-51, 53, 54, 56 and 57 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over European Patent No. 0 511 463 A2 issued to Greer, et al. ("*Greer*"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

In the Office Action mailed November 21, 2001, the Examiner takes official notice that "issuing a coupon to a consumer at an initial vendor that is redeemable at a subsequent vendor distinct from the initial vendor is old and well known in the art." Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's Official Notice regarding same. Applicants disagree with the assertion that this element is old and well-known in the art. Thus, to the extent that this rejection is maintained by the Examiner and based on "Official Notice," "well-known

art," common knowledge, or other information within the Examiner's personal knowledge, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner cite a reference in support of his position or provide an affidavit in accordance with M.P.E.P. § 2144.03 and 37 C.F.R. § 1.107.

Furthermore, in the Office Action dated November 21, 2001, the Examiner relies on the combination of such Official Notice and the teachings of *Greer*, to establish *prima facie* obviousness of the present invention. However, "if the proposed modification or combination of the prior art would change the principle of operation of the prior art invention being modified, then the teachings of the references are not sufficient to render the claims *prima facie* obvious. *In re Ratti*, 270 F.2d 810, 123 USPQ 349 (CCPA 1959). In the instant case, the combination proposed by the Examiner would entirely change the principle of operation of *Greer*. *Greer* is solely directed to issuing coupons that are redeemable during a subsequent visit to the initial vendor. (See Col. 2, lines 16-17; Col. 2, lines 27-28; Col. 2, lines 57-58; Col. 3, lines 54-55; Col. 5, lines 48-49; Col. 8, lines 23-25; and Col. 9, lines 17-19). In fact, *Greer* specifically states:

Ideally, it would benefit consumers, retailers and manufacturers if there were some way to automatically reward the purchase of a variety of selected products, to ensure purchase of the discounted products, to permit a large number of consumers to participate without signing up for discount clubs or identification cards, and to encourage consumers to **revisit the same store**. The present invention satisfies all these needs, as will be appreciated from the following summary. (Emphasis added).

Since the modification proposed by the Examiner would completely change the principle of operation of *Greer*, the proposed modification is impermissible, and cannot be used as a grounds for rejection of the present invention. *Id.*

Also, *Greer* expressly teaches away from the present invention, by disclosing an entirely different location (the initial vendor) for redeeming the coupon. There is no indication in *Greer* that the coupon can be redeemed at another location than the initial vendor that issued the coupon.

The test for obviousness is what the combined teachings of the references would have suggested to one of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Young*, *In re Keller*. Obviousness cannot be established by combining teachings of prior art to produce the claimed invention absent some teaching or suggestion to do so. The mere fact that prior art *could* be modified would not have made the modification obvious unless the prior art suggested the desirability of modification. *In re Fritch*. To establish *prima facie* obviousness, it is incumbent on the Examiner to provide reason(s) why one of ordinary skill in the art would have been led to modify the prior art or to combine reference teachings to arrive at the claimed invention. *Ex parte Clapp*.

There is no suggestion in the references cited by the Examiner to make the combination proposed by the Examiner. The only "suggestion" cited by the Examiner to make the proposed modification, is the following:

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill[ed] in the art at the time the applicant's invention was made to modify the teachings of Greer to include that the subsequent vendor is distinct from the initial vendor, because the system is benefiting customers, vendors and manufacturers by automatically rewarding the purchase of a variety of selected products, and to ensure purchase of the discounted product, see Greer (col. 2, lines 7-19).

However, this citation is improper to support making the combination proposed by the Examiner, because the Examiner fails to consider the entirety of the citation from *Greer*. Column 2, lines 7-19 of *Greer* continues on to state "and to ensure consumers to revisit the same store. The present invention satisfies all these needs..." (Emphasis added). Thus, *Greer* does not include any suggestion to make the combination proposed by the Examiner. In fact, *Greer* specifically and unequivocally teaches away from the proposed combination.

The Examiner employs the *Greer* reference in combination with the Official Notice referred to above in rejecting each of Claims 1-51, 53, 54, 56 and 57. Since this is an impermissible combination, Applicants respectfully contend that each of Claims 1-51, 53, 54, 56 and 57 are in condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Without restating each argument herein, Applicants rely upon the arguments presented in previous responses filed during prosecution of this application, including

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responses filed December 11, 2000, April 27, 2001, and August 24, 2001, regarding the patentability of Claims 1-51, 53, 54, 56 and 57.

**CONCLUSION**

Applicants have now made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request full allowance of all pending Claims. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully request an interference with the Nicholson Patent.

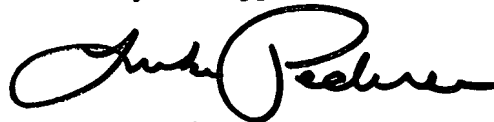
If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the undersigned attorney for Applicants stands ready to conduct such a conference at the convenience of the Examiner.

With the addition of claims, a filing fee of \$654.00 is due. A check in the amount of \$654.00 is enclosed herewith.

Applicants hereby take an Extension of Time for responding to the Examiner's Office Action dated November 21, 2001 for two (2) months from February 21, 2002 to April 21, 2002. The extension fee of \$200.00 for small entity is enclosed herewith.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,  
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**MARKED-UP VERSION OF SPECIFICATION AND CLAIM AMENDMENTS**

The Specification and Claims have been amended as follows:

**CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

The present application [is a **Continuation-in-Part** of] **claims priority to** U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial Number 60/082,927, entitled "FUEL REWARD PROGRAM SYSTEM" [(Att. Dkt. No. FMSI-24,304)] filed on April 24, 1998, and is co-pending with U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/183,788, entitled "METHOD FOR PROCESSING INFORMATION THROUGH CLEARINGHOUSE" [(Att. Dkt. No. FMSI-24,442)], filed [of even date herewith] **on October 30, 1998.**

**IN THE CLAIMS**

1. A method for generating a redemption value for at least one pre-determined redeemable item, comprising the steps of:

identifying discount triggering items in an initial purchase transaction at an initial vendor, the discount triggering items associated with a pre-determined redeemable item, each of the discount triggering items having a unique code and a manufacturer associated therewith and an associated discount value;

grouping the discount triggering items in bundles, each bundle comprising one or more discount triggering items having the same unique code and the same manufacturer, each bundle having an associated bundle total;

generating the redemption value for the pre-determined redeemable item based on the bundle totals, the redemption value representing a discount available for use in a subsequent purchase transaction at a subsequent vendor, the subsequent vendor distinct from the initial vendor, the subsequent purchase transaction comprising the pre-determined redeemable item;

providing the discount in the subsequent purchase transaction at the subsequent vendor; and

receiving a reimbursement for the discount from each manufacturer of the discount triggering items at the subsequent vendor, the reimbursement for each manufacturer based on

the bundle totals associated with the bundles comprising the discount triggering items for the manufacturer.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of grouping the discount triggering items in bundles is performed at the end of the initial purchase transaction.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of grouping further comprises the step of filtering in accordance with predetermined criteria the discount triggering items to be included in the bundle.

4. The method of Claim 3, wherein the step of filtering in accordance with the predetermined criteria comprises filtering the discount triggering items such that if the quantity of discount triggering items purchased is less than a predetermined minimum quantity for each of the unique codes, the bundle is not created.

5. The method of Claim 3, wherein the step of filtering in accordance with the predetermined criteria comprises limiting the number of discount triggering items in any one of the bundles to a maximum number.

6. The method of Claim 47, generating the redemption value for the predetermined redeemable item further comprising limiting the redemption value to a maximum value.

7. The method of Claim 1, the initial purchase transaction comprising a plurality of purchased items, the purchased items comprising the discount triggering items and non-discount triggering items, and further comprising the step of issuing cash register receipt information reflecting the retail price of each of the purchased items.

8. The method of Claim 1, the initial purchase transaction comprising a plurality of purchased items, the purchased items comprising the discount triggering items and non-discount triggering items, and further comprising the step of printing a paper receipt

comprising cash register receipt information and redemption information, the cash register receipt information reflecting the retail price of each of the purchased items and the redemption information comprising the redemption value and, for each bundle, the unique code associated with the discount triggering items in the bundle and the associated bundle total.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein the step of printing the paper receipt comprises the step of providing an incomplete cut between a portion of the paper receipt comprising the cash register receipt information and a portion of the paper receipt comprising the redemption information, such that the portion comprising the redemption information is easily detachable from the portion comprising the cash register receipt information.

10. The method of Claim 7, wherein the step of issuing the cash register receipt information comprises the step of providing an electronic code comprising the cash register receipt information.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the electronic code is recordable on a card having magnetic media.

12. The method of Claim 48, wherein the step of providing the redemption information comprises the step of providing an electronic code comprising the redemption information.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the electronic code is recordable on a card having magnetic media.

14. The method of Claim 1, the initial purchase transaction comprising a plurality of purchased items, the purchased items comprising the discount triggering items and non-discount triggering items, the non-discount triggering items having a unique code associated therewith, and wherein the step of identifying discount triggering items comprises the steps of:

receiving the unique code for each of the purchased items; and  
determining which of the purchased items has a unique code associated with a discount triggering item.

15. The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of providing a database having stored therein information identifying the discount triggering items and the associated unique codes, and wherein the step of determining which of the purchased items has a unique code associated with a discount triggering item comprises comparing each of the received unique codes with the information in the database.

16. The method of Claim 14, receiving the unique code for each of the purchased items comprising scanning the unique codes with a scanning device.

17. The method of Claim 14, receiving the unique code for each of the purchased items comprising inputting the unique codes manually.

18. The method of Claim 48, wherein the step of providing the redemption information comprises providing a description for each of the bundles, which description is associated with the unique code for the bundle.

19. The method of Claim 48, further comprising the steps of printing the redemption information on a paper slip and digitally encoding the redemption information on the paper slip, the digitally encoded redemption information optically retrievable.

20. The method of Claim 19, wherein the digitally encoded redemption information comprises a bar code.

21. The method of Claim 48, wherein each transaction has associated therewith a unique identification number (UID) and further comprising the step of printing the UID for the transaction on a paper containing the redemption information.

22. The method of Claim 1, the initial purchase transaction comprising a plurality of purchased items, the purchased items comprising the discount triggering items and non-discount triggering items, and wherein a product information table is provided for all items having a unique code and further comprising the step of creating a redemption table providing additional parameters associated with discount triggering items defining the ones of the items in the product information table as discount triggering items and also further comprising the step of creating a modified product information table by merging the redemption table with the product information table such that each unique code has associated therewith information regarding the identification of a product having that unique code, and that constitutes a discount triggering item, and wherein the step of identifying comprises comparing each of the purchased items and the associated unique code with information in the modified product information table, and when the unique code in the modified product information table has information associated therewith, defining it as a discount triggering item, and declaring that item a discount triggering item.

23. The method of Claim 48, further comprising the step of purchasing the pre-determined redeemable item in the subsequent purchase transaction by presenting a paper comprising the redemption information.

24. The method of Claim 48, wherein the pre-determined redeemable item is obtained by presenting electronic code comprising the redemption information.

25. A system for generating a redemption value for at least one pre-determined redeemable item, comprising:

identifying means for identifying discount triggering items in an initial purchase transaction at an initial vendor, the discount triggering items associated with a pre-determined redeemable item, each of the discount triggering items having a unique code and a manufacturer associated therewith and an associated discount value;

grouping means for grouping the discount triggering items in bundles, each bundle comprising one or more discount triggering items having the same unique code and the same manufacturer, each bundle having an associated bundle total;

output means for generating the redemption value for the pre-determined redeemable item based on the bundle totals, the redemption value representing a discount available for use in a subsequent purchase transaction at a subsequent vendor, the subsequent vendor distinct from the initial vendor, the subsequent purchase transaction comprising the pre-determined redeemable item;

means for providing the discount in the subsequent purchase transaction at the subsequent vendor; and

means for receiving a reimbursement for the discount from each manufacturer of the discount triggering items at the subsequent vendor, the reimbursement for each manufacturer based on the bundle totals associated with the bundles comprising the discount triggering items for the manufacturer.

26. The system of Claim 25, wherein the bundles are created at the end of the initial purchase transaction.

27. The system of Claim 25, wherein the grouping means further comprises a filtering means for filtering, in accordance with predetermined criteria, the discount triggering items to be included in the bundle.

28. The system of Claim 27, wherein the bundle is created only if the quantity of discount triggering items purchased is equal to or greater than a predetermined minimum quantity for each of the unique codes.

29. The system of Claim 27, wherein the number of discount triggering items in any one of the bundles is limited to maximum number.

30. The system of Claim 49, the output means for limiting the redemption value to a maximum value.

31. The system of Claim 25, the initial purchase transaction comprising a plurality of purchased items, the purchased items comprising the discount triggering items and non-

discount triggering items, and further comprising output means for issuing cash register receipt information reflecting the retail price of each of the purchased items.

32. The system of Claim 31, wherein both the cash register receipt information and redemption information are issued on a paper receipt, the redemption information comprising the redemption value and, for each bundle, the unique code associated with the discount triggering items in the bundle and the associated bundle total.

33. The system of Claim 32, wherein the paper receipt comprises an incomplete cut between a portion comprising the cash register receipt information and a paper portion comprising the redemption information, such that the portion comprising the redemption information is easily detachable from the portion comprising the cash register receipt information.

34. The system of Claim 31, the output means for providing redemption information and the cash register receipt information in the form of an electronic code, the redemption information comprising the redemption value and, for each bundle, the unique code associated with the discount triggering items in the bundle and the associated bundle total.

35. The system of Claim 34, wherein the electronic code is recordable on a card having magnetic media.

36. The system of Claim 25, the initial purchase transaction comprising a plurality of purchased items, the purchased items comprising the discount triggering items and non-discount triggering items, the non-discount triggering items having a unique code associated therewith, and wherein the identifying means comprises:

- a receiving means for receiving the unique code for each of the purchased items; and
- a determining means for determining which of the purchased items has a unique code associated with a discount triggering item.

37. The system of Claim 36, further comprising a database having stored therein information identifying the discount triggering items and the associated unique codes, the determining means for comparing the unique codes of the purchased items with the information in the database in order to determine which of the purchased items are discount triggering items.

38. The system of Claim 37, wherein the unique codes are all scannable by a scanning device.

39. The system of Claim 37, wherein the unique codes are input manually.

40. The system of Claim 50, wherein the redemption information comprises a description for each of the bundles, which description is associated with the unique code for the bundle.

41. The system of Claim 50, wherein the redemption information is printed on a paper slip with a digitally encoded region disposed thereon, the digitally encoded region comprising information regarding the information contained within the paper slip, the digitally encoded information optically retrievable.

42. The system of Claim 41, wherein the digitally encoded region comprises a bar code.

43. The system of Claim 50, wherein each transaction has associated therewith a unique identification number which is printed on a paper containing the redemption information.

44. The system of Claim 25, the initial purchase transaction comprising a plurality of purchased items, the purchased items comprising the discount triggering items and non-discount triggering items, and wherein a product information table is provided for all items having a unique code, a redemption table is provided for additional parameters associated



with discount triggering items defining the ones of the items in the product information table as discount triggering items, a modified product information table is provided by merging the redemption table with the product information table such that each unique code has associated therewith information regarding the identification of a product having that unique code and that constitutes a discount triggering item, and wherein each of the purchased items and the associated unique code are compared with information in the modified product information table and when the unique code in the modified product information table has information associated therewith defining it as a discount triggering item and declaring that item a discount triggering item.

45. The system of Claim 50, wherein the pre-determined redeemable item is purchased in the subsequent purchase transaction by presenting a paper comprising the redemption information.

46. The system of Claim 50, wherein the pre-determined redeemable item is obtained by presenting electronic code comprising the redemption information.

47. The method of Claim 1, generating the redemption value for the pre-determined redeemable item based on the bundle totals comprising summing the bundle totals.

48. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of providing redemption information comprising the redemption value and, for each bundle, the unique code associated with the discount triggering items in the bundle and the associated bundle total.

49. The system of Claim 25, the output means for generating the redemption value by summing the bundle totals.

50. The system of Claim 25, the output means for providing redemption information comprising the redemption value and, for each bundle, the unique code associated with the discount triggering items in the bundle and the associated bundle total.

51. A method for generating a redemption value for at least one pre-determined redeemable item, comprising the steps of:

identifying credit triggering items in an initial purchase transaction at an initial vendor, the discount triggering items associated with a pre-determined redeemable item, each of the credit triggering items having a unique code and a manufacturer associated therewith and an associated credit value;

grouping the credit triggering items in bundles, each bundle comprising one or more credit triggering items having the same unique code and the same manufacturer, each bundle having an associated bundle total;

generating the redemption value for the pre-determined redeemable item based on the bundle totals, the redemption value representing a credit available for use in a subsequent purchase transaction at a subsequent vendor, the subsequent vendor distinct from the initial vendor, the subsequent purchase transaction comprising the pre-determined redeemable item;

providing the credit in the subsequent purchase transaction at the subsequent vendor;  
and

receiving a reimbursement for the credit from each manufacturer of the credit triggering items at the subsequent vendor, the reimbursement for each manufacturer based on the bundle totals associated with the bundles comprising the credit triggering items for the manufacturer.

52. **Canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.**

53. The method of Claim 1, the initial vendor comprising a grocery store and the subsequent vendor comprising a gas station.

54. The method of Claim 1, the pre-determined redeemable item comprising fuel.

55. **Canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.**

56. The system of Claim 25, the initial vendor comprising a grocery store and the subsequent vendor comprising a gas station.

57. The system of Claim 25, the pre-determined redeemable item comprising fuel.

**Please add the following new claims:**

58. (New) A method, comprising:  
receiving a plurality of items associated with an initial transaction between an initial vendor and a customer;  
identifying a plurality of discount triggering items of the initial transaction, each discount triggering item including a respective partial discount being redeemable toward the purchase of a fuel during a subsequent transaction with a subsequent vendor, distinct from the initial vendor;  
each discount triggering item having a respective unique code and a respective manufacturer;  
generating a total discount value, wherein the total discount value comprises a sum of qualifying partial discounts of the respective partial discounts, the total discount value being redeemable toward the fuel during the subsequent transaction;  
providing the customer with the total discount value;  
generating issue information associated with providing the customer with the total discount information, the issue information including a unique identifier corresponding to the initial vendor, a description of each discount triggering item, and the respective partial discount associated with each discount triggering item; and  
transmitting the issue information from the initial vendor to a third party for further processing of the issue information, the third party being separate and distinct from the initial vendor.

59. (New) The method of Claim 58, further comprising providing the total discount to the customer during the subsequent transaction.

60. (New) The method of Claim 58, further comprising:  
verifying that the subsequent transaction exceeds a predetermined minimum amount of fuel;

providing the total discount to the customer during the subsequent transaction, if the subsequent transaction exceeds the predetermined minimum amount of fuel.

61. (New) The method of Claim 58, further comprising:  
receiving the issue information at the third party;  
receiving, at the third party, redemption information regarding the subsequent transaction from the subsequent vendor; and  
associating the issue information and the redemption information.

62. (New) The method of Claim 61, further comprising:  
generating invoices for each of the respective manufacturers; and  
transmitting the invoices to the respective manufacturers.

63. (New) A method for discounting a price-per-unit (PPU) of a consumable good, comprising:

determining a first discount on a PPU of a consumable good in response to a first purchase, by a customer, of a first preselected product;

determining a second discount on the PPU of the consumable good in response to a second purchase, by the customer, of a second preselected product; and

adding the first discount to the second discount to determine a total discount on the PPU of the consumable good.

64. (New) A method of providing multiple level discounts on a price-per-unit (PPU) of a consumable good sold in multiple units to a customer who purchases a plurality of cross-marketed products, said method comprising the steps of:

- awarding a first discount on the PPU of the consumable good to the customer in response to a purchase by the customer of a first cross-marketed product;

- awarding a second discount on the PPU of the consumable good to the customer in response to a purchase by the customer of a second cross-marketed product;

- adding the first discount to the second discount to determine a total discount on the PPU of the consumable good; and

- awarding the total discount to the customer.

65. (New) The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 64 wherein the consumable good is gasoline, and the first, second, and total discounts are discounts on the price-per-unit-volume of gasoline.

66. (New) The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 65, further comprising:

- issuing an electronic coupon to the customer, said coupon providing a unique customer identification and a unique transaction identifier; and

- storing the total discount in a discounts granted database which associates the total discount with the unique customer identification and transaction identifier.

67. (New) The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 66 wherein the electronic coupon is selected from the group consisting of:

- a paper receipt with the unique customer identification and transaction identifier encoded in a bar code imprinted thereon;

- a paper receipt with the unique customer identification and transaction identifier encoded in a code number imprinted thereon;

- a credit card with the unique customer identification and transaction identifier magnetically encoded thereon; and

- a smart card.

68. (New) The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 67, further comprising the steps of:

inputting the electronic coupon by the customer for redemption at a gasoline station;  
and

reducing on a gasoline dispenser, the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline by an amount equal to the total discount prior to the customer dispensing the gasoline.

69. (New) The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 68 wherein the step of inputting the electronic coupon by the customer for redemption at a gasoline station includes scanning the unique customer identification and transaction identifier from the encoded bar code with a bar code scanner at a gasoline dispenser, and the method further comprises, after scanning the encoded bar code, the steps of:

associating the unique customer identification and discount identification with the total price-per-unit discount stored in the discounts granted database; and

retrieving the total price-per-unit discount from the discounts granted database.

70. (New) The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 69, further comprising, after the step of scanning the unique customer identification and transaction identifier from the encoded bar code, the steps of:

requesting the customer to enter a personal identification number (PIN); and

verifying the PIN prior to reducing the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline on the gasoline dispenser.

71. (New) The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 69, further comprising, after the step of storing the total discount in a discounts issued database, the steps of:

storing, in the discounts issued database, a maximum number of gallons of gasoline to which the discount applies; and

storing, in the discounts issued database, a minimum purchase of gasoline required in order to qualify for the discount.

72. (New) The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 71, further comprising the steps of:

- determining a value of the total discount redeemed;
- verifying that the value of the total discount redeemed is less than or equal to the maximum discount allowed; and
- verifying that the amount of gasoline purchased is greater than or equal to the minimum purchase required to qualify for the discount.

73. (New) The method of providing multiple level discounts of claim 72, further comprising the steps of:

- storing the value of the discount redeemed in a discounts redeemed database; and
- allocating portions of the discount redeemed to vendors of the first and second cross-marketed products according to predetermined criteria.

74. (New) A method of providing a discount on a price-per-unit (PPU) of a consumable good sold in multiple units to a customer who purchases at least one cross-marketed product, said method comprising the steps of:

- awarding a first discount on the PPU of the consumable good to the customer in response to a purchase by the customer of a first cross-marketed product;
- issuing a coupon to the customer, said coupon providing a customer identification and a transaction identifier;
- storing the first discount in a discounts granted database which associates the first discount with the customer identification and the transaction identifier;
- inputting by the customer in a subsequent transaction, the customer identification and the transaction identifier;
- retrieving the first discount from the discounts issued database; and
- reducing the PPU of the consumable good by the first discount.

75. (New) The method of providing a discount on a PPU of a consumable good of claim 74, further comprising, after the step of awarding a first discount, the steps of:

awarding a second discount on the PPU of the consumable good to the customer in response to a purchase by the customer of a second cross-marketed product; and

adding the first discount to the second discount to determine a total discount on the PPU of the consumable good.

76. (New) The method of providing a discount on a PPU of a consumable good of claim 74 wherein the first product is gasoline, and the discount amount is a discount on the price-per-unit-volume of gasoline.

77. (New) A method of providing multiple level discounts on gasoline to a customer who purchases at least one cross-marketed product, said method comprising the steps of:

awarding to the customer, a first discount on the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline in response to a purchase by the customer of a first cross-marketed product;

awarding to the customer, a second discount on the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline in response to a purchase by the customer of a second cross-marketed product;

adding the first discount to the second discount to determine a total discount on the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline;

printing a paper receipt for the customer with a customer identification and a transaction identifier encoded in a bar code thereon;

storing the total discount in a discounts granted database;

storing, in the discounts granted database, a maximum number of gallons to which the discount applies;

storing, in the discounts granted database, a minimum purchase of gasoline required in order to qualify for the discount;

scanning the encoded bar code with a bar code scanner at a gasoline dispenser;

verifying the discount scanned from the bar code by comparing the scanned discount with the stored discount in the discounts granted database;

reducing, by the gasoline dispenser, the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline by an



amount equal to the total discount;  
determining a value of the total discount redeemed;  
verifying that the value of the total discount redeemed is less than or equal to the maximum discount allowed;  
verifying that the amount of gasoline purchased is greater than or equal to the minimum purchase required to qualify for the discount;  
storing the value of the discount redeemed in a discounts redeemed database; and  
allocating portions of the discount redeemed to vendors of the first and second cross-marketed products according to predetermined criteria.

78. (New) A method of providing a price-per-unit-volume discount on gasoline to a customer who purchases a cross-marketed product in a sales transaction, said method comprising the steps of:

awarding the price-per-unit-volume discount to the customer in response to a purchase by the customer of a cross-marketed product;

issuing an electronic coupon to the customer, said coupon identifying the customer and the sales transaction;

storing the price-per-unit-volume discount in a discounts issued database which associates the discount with the customer and sales transaction;

storing, in the discounts granted database, a maximum number of volume units of gasoline to which the discount is applied;

storing, in the discounts granted database, a minimum purchase of gasoline required in order to qualify for the discount;

beginning a sales transaction by entering a customer identification and a transaction identification at a gasoline dispenser;

retrieving the price-per-unit-volume discount from the discounts granted database;

reducing, by the gasoline dispenser, the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline by an amount equal to the discount;

determining a value of the total discount redeemed;

verifying that the value of the total discount redeemed is less than or equal to the maximum discount allowed;

verifying that the amount of gasoline purchased is greater than or equal to the minimum purchase required to qualify for the discount; and  
storing the value of the discount redeemed in a discounts redeemed database.

79. (New) The method of providing a price-per-unit-volume discount on gasoline of claim 78 wherein the step of reducing the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline by an amount equal to the discount includes the steps of:

determining whether the discount is greater than or equal to the price-per-unit volume of the gasoline; and

setting the price-per-unit volume of the gasoline equal to zero on a gasoline dispenser upon determining that the discount is greater than or equal to the price-per-unit volume of the gasoline.

80. (New) A system for providing multiple level discounts on a price-per-unit (PPU) of a consumable good sold in multiple units to a customer who purchases a plurality of cross-marketed products, said system comprising:

a discounts granted database for storing discounts;

means for calculating a first discount on the PPU of the consumable good in response to a purchase by a customer of a first cross-marketed product;

means for calculating a second discount on the PPU of the consumable good in response to a purchase by the customer of a second cross-marketed product; and

a system which adds the first discount to the second discount to determine a total discount for the customer on the PPU of the consumable good.

81. (New) The system for providing multiple level discounts of claim 80 wherein the consumable good is gasoline, and the first, second, and total discounts are discounts on the price-per-unit-volume of gasoline.

82. (New) The system for providing multiple level discounts of claim 81 further comprising:

a point of sale (POS) terminal that determines the first discount and issues an electronic coupon to the customer, said coupon providing a unique customer identification and a unique transaction identifier; and

transmission means for transmitting the unique customer identification and the discount identification from the POS terminal to the discounts issued database.

83. (New) A system for providing a discount on a price-per-unit (PPU) of a consumable good sold in multiple units to a customer who purchases at least one cross-marketed product, said system comprising:

a point of sale (POS) terminal that awards a first discount on the PPU of the consumable good to the customer in response to a purchase by the customer of a first cross-marketed product, said POS terminal including means for issuing a coupon to the customer, said coupon providing a unique customer identification and a transaction identification;

means for sending the first discount from the POS terminal to a discounts granted database which associates the first discount with the unique customer identification and the transaction identification;

an input device for inputting by the customer in a subsequent transaction, the unique customer identification and the transaction identification;

a sub-system that retrieves the first discount from the discounts issued database; and

means for reducing the PPU of the consumable good by the first discount in response to instructions from the sub-system.

84. (New) The system for providing a discount on a PPU of a consumable good of claim 83 wherein the POS terminal also includes means for awarding a second discount on the PPU of the consumable good to the customer in response to a purchase by the customer of a second cross-marketed product, and the sub-system includes means for adding the first discount to the second discount to determine a total discount on the PPU of the consumable good.

85. (New) A system for providing a price-per-unit-volume discount on gasoline to a customer who purchases a cross-marketed product in a sales transaction, said system comprising:

a point of sale (POS) terminal comprising:

means for awarding the price-per-unit-volume discount to the customer in response to a purchase by the customer of a cross-marketed product; and

means for issuing an electronic coupon to the customer, said coupon uniquely identifying the customer and the sales transaction;

a discounts issued database for storing the price-per-unit-volume discount and uniquely associating the discount with the customer and sales transaction;

transmission means for sending from the POS terminal to the discounts issued database, a maximum number of volume units of gasoline to which the discount is applied, and a minimum purchase of gasoline required in order to qualify for the discount;

an input device at a gasoline dispenser at a gas station for entering a unique customer identification;

a sub-system for retrieving the price-per-unit-volume discount from the discounts granted database, upon associating the unique customer identification with the stored price-per-unit-volume discount;

means for reducing, by the gasoline station, the price-per-unit-volume of the gasoline by an amount equal to the discount;

means within the sub-system for determining a value of the total discount redeemed, verifying that the value of the total discount redeemed is less than or equal to the maximum discount allowed, and verifying that the amount of gasoline purchased is greater than or equal to the minimum purchase required to qualify for the discount; and

a discounts redeemed database for storing the value of the discount redeemed.